

THE WHITE HOUSE

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EXCERPTS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION

As Prepared for Delivery

Tonight President Bush will address the Nation from the White House to lay out his plan for a new way forward in Iraq.

On the new strategy:

Tonight in Iraq, the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged in a struggle that will determine the direction of the global war on terror - and our safety here at home. The new strategy I outline tonight will change America's course in Iraq, and help us succeed in the fight against terror.

On the role of the Iraqis:

Only the Iraqis can end the sectarian violence and secure their people. And their government has put forward an aggressive plan to do it.

On securing Baghdad:

Our past efforts to secure Baghdad failed for two principal reasons: There were not enough Iraqi and American troops to secure neighborhoods that had been cleared of terrorists and insurgents. And there were too many restrictions on the troops we did have. Our military commanders reviewed the new Iraqi plan to ensure that it addressed these mistakes. They report that it does. They also report that this plan can work...and Prime Minister Maliki has pledged that political or sectarian interference will not be tolerated.

On what Iraq must do:

I have made it clear to the Prime Minister and Iraq's other leaders that America's commitment is not open-ended. If the Iraqi government does not follow through on its promises, it will lose the support of the American people - and it will lose the support of the Iraqi people. Now is the time to act. The Prime Minister understands this.

On the economic component:

A successful strategy for Iraq goes beyond military operations. Ordinary Iraqi citizens must see that military operations are accompanied by visible improvements in their neighborhoods and communities. So America will hold the Iraqi government to the benchmarks it has announced.

On protecting the American people:

The challenge playing out across the broader Middle East is more than a military conflict. It is the decisive ideological struggle of our time...In the long run, the most realistic way to protect the American people is to provide a hopeful alternative to the hateful ideology of the enemy - by advancing liberty across a troubled region.

On what victory in Iraq will look like:

The changes I have outlined tonight are aimed at ensuring the survival of a young democracy that is fighting for its life in a part of the world of enormous importance to American security...The question is whether our new strategy will bring us closer to success. I believe that it will...Victory will not look like the ones our fathers and grandfathers achieved. There will be no surrender ceremony on the deck of a battleship...A democratic Iraq will not be perfect. But it will be a country that fights terrorists instead of harboring them - and it will help bring a future of peace and security for our children and grandchildren.

On bringing our troops home:

[To]step back now would force a collapse of the Iraqi government...Such a scenario would result in our troops being forced to stay in Iraq even longer, and confront an enemy that is even more lethal. If we increase our support at this crucial moment, and help the Iraqis break the current cycle of violence, we can hasten the day our troops begin coming home.

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